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2623-02

03500.013853.

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:)
HIROYUKI SHINBATA) Examiner: C.R. Kim
Application No.: 09/405,176) Group Art Unit: 2623
Filed: September 24, 1999)
For: IMAGE PROCESSING METHOD)
AND APPARATUS AND)
RECORDING MEDIUM) July 9, 2002

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Technology Center 2600

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated June 11, 2002, Applicant elects, with traverse, Group I, of Claims 1-7, 16 and 19. For the following reasons, however, Applicant strongly believes that the three Groups can, without undue burden on the Office, be examined together in one application, and requests that they be examined in one application.

In Applicant's view, an important concept, generic to the three groups, is the idea that "the passing through are is eliminated", and that "the pixel values are accumulated in the predetermined direction", and that "the area for extracting the pixel value characteristic amount is determined based on the accumulated result". The features characterizing the three groups from each other are:

- I. The pixel values being accumulated by the projection;
- II. The contour being determined, the area for extraction of the pixel characteristic amount being determined from the shape of the contour, and either of the above determinations being adopted based on a comparison of the two areas; and

III. The accumulated result being divided by the number of pixels, to obtain an average pixel value in the predetermined direction, the area for extraction of the pixel value characteristic amount being determined based on the average.

In view of the common ground among the three Groups, Applicant believes that a thorough search of any Group will likely include most if not all of the search required for the other two, and that handling of the three groups in a single application will therefore ultimately result in a lesser burden on the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of the restriction requirement, and early and favorable examination on the merits of all claims, are respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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